

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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R 141011Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8400

INFO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 0406

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, IR, CE, BG, NP

SUBJECT: NEPALESE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO PAKISTAN

REFS: A. KATHMANDU 0146

B. ISLAMABAD 0249

SUMMARY: NEPALESE PRIMIN RIJAL'S UNOFFICIAL VISIT TO PAKISTAN JANUARY 3-7, WHILE REplete WITH ANNOUNCEMENTS OF SCHEDULE CHANGES, WAS NONETHELESS REGARDED HERE AS ROUTINE AND MILDLY SUCCESSFUL. RIJAL AND PM BHUTTO'S 105 MINUTE DISCUSSION AT HYDERABAD ON THEME OF NORMALIZATION OF SUBCONTINENTAL RELATIONS CALLED "VERY SUCCESSFUL" BY RIJAL. WHILE SUBJECT OF AIR SERVICE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES GIVEN PRESS PLAY, NEPALESE EMBOFF PESSIMISTIC ABOUT ITS IMPLEMENTATION BUT MORE SANGUINE ABOUT TRADE POSSIBILITIES. SAME EMBOFF GAVE DETAILED EXPLANATION FOR SCHEDULE FOUL-UPS REPORTED REFTEL A AND EVIDENT BUT NOT CRITICIZED IN LOCAL PRESS REPORTS. PRIMIN
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BHUTTO TO VISIT NEPAL, PROBABLY IN SEPTEMBER OR

OCTOBER. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTER RIJAL OF NEPAL, ACCOMPANIED BY MIN OF STATE FOR FINANCE THAPA AND FORSEC KHATRI, PAID UNOFFICIAL VISIT TO PAKISTAN JANUARY 3-7 WHILE ENROUTE TO TEHRAN. DURING STAY HERE, WHICH WAS REplete WITH ANNOUNCEMENTS OF SCHEDULE CHANGES, HE HAD "FRIENDLY TALK" WITH PM BHUTTO IN HYDERABAD, MET MANY OTHER DIGNITARIES, WAS WELL WINE AND DINED, AND PAID USUAL CEREMONIAL VISITS TO LAHORE AND KARACHI PLACES OF INTEREST.

2. ACCORDING TO PRESS, RIJAL: - DESCRIBED MEETING WITH BHUTTO AS VERY SUCCESSFUL AND SAID THERE WAS POSITIVE IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES; - SAID NEPAL-PAKISTAN FLIGHTS, ABOUT WHICH AN AGREEMENT HAD ALREADY BEEN DRAWN UP, WOULD BEGIN IN "A FEW MONTHS" AFTER "TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES" WORKED OUT; - AND NOTED THAT EFFORTS ALSO BEING MADE TO SURMOUNT "DIFFICULTIES" STANDING IN WAY OF NEPALI-PAK TRADE WHICH HAD NOT MATERIALIZED DESPITE EXISTING AGREEMENT.

3. EMBOFF JANUARY 13 DISCUSSED VISIT WITH NEPALI EMBOFF PUSHKAR RAJBHANDARI, WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FROM KARACHI WHERE HE HAD BEEN OCCUPIED WITH VISIT SINCE LATE DECEMBER. SCHEDULING ERRORS REPORTED REFTTEL OBVIOUSLY HAD CAUSED NEPALESE HERE MUCH GRIEF AS RAJBHANDARI UNPROMPTED LED OFF CONVERSATION WITH EXPLANATION FOR THEM.

4. ACCORDING TO HIM, IRAN TRIP INITIALLY SET FOR JANUARY 1-3, WAS POSTPONED WHILE PM'S PARTY IN BANGKOK ENROUTE TEHRAN WITH SCHEDULED TWO HOUR STOPOVER IN KARACHI. (PARTY PLANNED TO RETURN HERE JANUARY 3 FOR MAIN PORTION OF VISIT.) POSTPONEMENT CAME AT REQUEST OF IRANIAN PRIMIN WHO TIED UP WITH DIFFICULT BUDGET SESSION OF MAJLIS, RESET FOR JANUARY 7. PAK AMBASSADOR TO NEPAL INAYATULLAH WHO WAS IN BANGKOK WITH PARTY, AND NEPALESE FORSEC THEN REPLANNED PAK
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PORTION OF TRIP. NEPALESE BLAME INAYATULLAH AND PAK PROTOCOL OFFICERS FOR SCHEDULING AND ANNOUNCING RIJAL'S ARRIVAL DATE AS JANUARY 2 WITHOUT CONSULTING THEM. HOWEVER, THEY STRESS THAT PRIMIN BHUTTO DID NOT COOL HIS HEELS AT AIRPORT AS NO OFFICIAL PARTY WAS TO MEET PLANE. PROTOCOL OFFICE ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR ANNOUNCING IN-COUNTRY VISIT SCHEDULE CHANGES (LAHORE INSTEAD OF RAWALPINDI) WITHOUT CONSULTING NEPALESE.

5. CANCELLATION OF SRI LANKA AND BANGLADESH PORTIONS OF TRIP FOLLOWED LATE REQUESTS FROM THESE GOVERNMENTS, RAJBHANDARI ASSERTED. COLOMBO WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION AND DACCA WITH RECENTLY PROCLAIMED STATE OF EMERGENCY, SO BOTH ASKED THAT RIJAL NOT COME AFTER TRIP HAD ALREADY BEGUN.

6. BHUTTO-RIJAL TALKS WHICH, ACCORDING TO PRESS, RAN 105 MINUTES, WERE COUCHED IN GENERAL TERMS, RAJBHANDARI SAID, AROUND A THEME OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS ON SUB-CONTINENT. NEITHER OFFERED CRITICISM OF INDIA AND BHUTTO DISCUSSED BANGLADESH POVERTY BUT NOT IMPORTANT ISSUE OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES.

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7. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO HAS ACCEPTED RIJAL'S INVITATION TO VISIT NEPAL THIS YEAR. WHILE PRESS REPORTS MADE NO MENTION OF DATE, RAJBHANDARI REVEALED THAT TRIP WILL PROBABLY TAKE PLACE IN SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER. (PRESIDENT FAZAL ELAHI CHAUDHRY, NOT PRIMIN, WILL

LEAD PAK DELEGATION TO NEXT MONTH'S CORONATION.)

8. RAJBHANDARI LESS SANGUINE ABOUT ESTABLISHMENT OF AIR LINKS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES THAN WAS RIJAL. BOTH SIDES HAVE AGREED TO KATHMANDU-DELHI-BOMBAY-KARACHI ROUTES FOR BOTH PIA AND RNA AND PAKS WOULD ALLOW LATTER TO BEGIN ANYTIME WITH PIA COMMENCEMENT OF SERVICE TO FOLLOW UPON IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH INDIA. HOWEVER, WHILE NEPALIS VIEW DELHI-BOMBAY LEG AS VERY PROFITABLE, THEY CONSIDER THE BOMBAY-KARACHI PORTION TOO COMPETITIVE, AND THUS A MONEY LOSER: THEREFORE NOT IN THEIR INTEREST. IF THIS IS CASE, THEN MORE THAN "TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES" ARE INVOLVED IN ESTABLISHING AIR ROUTES. RNA, HOWEVER, DOES WANT A PIECE OF DELHI-LAHORE-KABUL-
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TEHRAN-BEIRUT ACTION BUT, IN INTEREST OF PROTECTING AFGHAN FRIENDS, WHOSE AIRLINE WOULD SUFFER FROM COMPETITION, INDIANS WILL NOT LET THEM BE CUT IN, OR SO CLAIMS RAJBHANDARI.

9. A 1964 PAK-NEPALI TRADE AGREEMENT IS STILL IN FORCE, NEPALIESE REMARKED, BUT MAIN BARRIER TO TRADE, WHICH VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT NOW, IS BETTWER PRICES OFFERED NEPALESE BY WESTERN NATIONS. HOWEVER, WHILE TWO ECONOMIES ARE BASICALLY COMPETITORS, THERE ARE SOME PROSPECTS FOR PAK IMPORT OF TIMBER AND LOW QUALITY RICE.

10. THE GOP, FOR ITS PART, SEEMS TO VIEW THE NEPALESE VISIT AS A USEFUL EXERCISE, BUT NOT ONE OF ANY GREAT POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC MEMENT. MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL (SOUTH ASIA) ABDUL SATTAR, WHO SHEPHERDED THE PARTY THROUGH MOST OF ITS EXTENDED STAY, TOLD THE POL COUNSELOR THAT THE PAKS DELIBERATELY DID NOT ENCOURAGE THE NEPALESE TO TALK ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS WITH THE INDIANS. THE PAKS, HE NOTED, ARE AWARE OF THESE PROBLEMS AND HAVE WHAT SATTAR CALLED "A GREAT FUND OF SYMPATHY FOR THE NEPALESE", BUT THEY KNOW THAT THERE IS NOTHING MUCH THE GOP CAN DO FOR THEM. NOR, AT LEAST ACCORDING TO SATTAR, DID THE PAKS SEEK NAPALESE SUPPORT FOR ANY FURTHER MOVES THEY MAY HAVE IN MIND TO FOLLOW UP THEIR SOUTH ASIAN NUCLEAR FREE ZONE INITIATIVE. HE DESCRIBED THE BHUTTO-RIJAL MEETING AT THE HYDERABAD CIRCUIT HOUSE AS UNEVENTFUL, A BRIEF BREAK FOR BHUTTO FROM DOMESTIC POLITICKING IN WHICH HE DID MOST OF THE TALKING. SATTAR SEEMED MORE AMUSED THAN TROUBLED BY THE EXTENSION OF THE VISIT AND MAINTAINED THAT IT HAD BEEN NO PROBLEM FOR THE PAKS.
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